

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 /105 W
-----114296 130345Z /70

P R 122036Z APR 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1610
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 0939

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV PINT MILI ET SO CU UR
SUBJ: WHEREABOUT OF RAUL CASTRO

1. IRAQI FIRST SECRETARY (AL-RAB), APRIL 12, INFORMED US THAT HE CONVERSED WITH CUBAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE RAUL CASTRO AT HAVANA AIRPORT, APRIL 9, WHEN LATTER'S WIFE VILMA ESPIN DEPARTED FOR BAGHDAD (AS HEAD OF CUBAN WOMEN'S DELEGATION). THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE SEPCULATION HERE THAT RAUL, WHO HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICLY SEEN SINCE MARCH 31, HAD DEPARTED CUBA FOR AFRICA AND MOSCOW. ROMANIAN COUNSELOR, APRIL 11, INDICATED THAT CUBANS HAD FAILED TO REPLY TO ROMANIAN QUERIES ON RAUL'S WHEREABOUTS.

2. CUBAN PRESS NOTES THAT FIDEL CASTRO DURING LAST TWO DAYS HAS BEEN VISITING INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, URGING WORKERS TO MAKE UP DELAYS. GOC FOREIGN POLICY KINGPIN CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ WAS ALSO NOTED IN HAVANA ON APRIL 11 RECEIVING A BULGARIAN DELEGATION. ONLY MAJOR GOC FOREIGN POLCY FIGURE UNACCOUNTED FOR IS SECRETARIAT MEMBER RAUL VALDES VIVO (FYI ROMANIANS WERE TOLD, AT COCKTAIL OFFERED CONFIDENTIAL

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LAST WEEK BY LIONEL SOTO, NEW CHIEF OF GENERAL FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE - HAVANA 808 NOTAL, THAT DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE UNDER SUPERVISION OF CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ SINCE THE RECENTLY PROMOTED VALDES VIVO WOULD BE TRAVELING A GREAT DEAL AS "A SORT OF ROVING AMBASSADOR FOR PARTY". END FYI) WIRE SERVICES ARE REPORTING FONMIN MALMIERCA WILL LEAVE FOR MOSCOW AFTER APRIL 15.

3. COMMENT: CUBAN PRESS COVERAGE OF HORN CRISIS, WITH EXCEPTION OF LAST WEEK'S BLAST AGAINST DAVID OWEN (HAVANA 906) AND REPETITION OF AFP REPORTS ON SOMALI COUP ATTEMPT, HAS ALMOST CEASED. WE BELIEVE THAT FUNDAMENTAL DECISIONS ARE NOW BEING MADE ON NEXT PHASE OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT ON HORN. WHILE CUBANS IN THEIR OWEN RIPOSTE LEAVE ALL OPTIONS OPEN, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF ERITREAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT, THE POSSIBLE CAUTIONS OF THE IRAQIS, ALGERIANS, LIBYANS, AND SYRIANS MAY STILL BEAR FRUIT. (FYI LIBYAN AMBASSADOR HERE TOLD USINT CHIEF, APRIL 12, THAT, DURING RECENT MALMIERCA VISIT TO BAGHDAD, IRAQIS WERE ADAMANT IN REFUSING TO ACCOMMODATE CUBAN COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE ON HONR - INSISTING ON UNILATERAL STATEMENTS IF THE HORN WERE MENTIONED. ON OTHER HAND, WE NOTE THAT STEPS ARE UNDERWAY, ACCORDING TO IRAQI EMBASSY HERE, TO ESTABLISH DIRECT PART-TO-PARTY TIES BETWEEN CUBAN CP AND IRAQI BAATH (SEPTTEL) WE ALSO NOTE IRAQI STRONGMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN RECEIVED VILMA ESPIN FOR MORE THAN HOUR ON APRIL 11. END FYI).

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